

REMARKS

Reconsideration of this application, as amended, is requested.

Claims 1-10 remain in the application. All of the remaining claims have been amended to eliminate the numeric references. Numeric references are not required under U.S. patent law and are given no patentable weight. Accordingly, an amendment to eliminate numeric references is not a narrowing amendment and is not an amendment entered for purposes of patentability. Claims 6 and 7 also have been amended into independent form.

The Examiner objected to the drawings because they did not show the feature of the invention defined in original claim 4.

The specification has been amended to make reference to a new figure. Additionally, replacement sheets are provided to show the new figure. This amendment is supported by original claim 4 and hence the amendment does not add new matter.

Claims 1-5 and 8-10 were rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being obvious over Makita et al., U.S. Patent No. 5,611,706. The Examiner asserted that the Makita et al. reference has a sealing plug for a watertight connector. The Examiner then stated that

"A frictional resistance at projections 49 between the inner wall of the cavity 31 and the sealing plug 15 appears to be larger than a frictional resistance between the wire and the sealing plug. Makita discloses the claimed invention in which it appears that the frictional resistance between the wire and the sealing plug will permit a movement of the wire relative to the sealing plug when the wire is caused to move. Since the reference does not discuss this matter, it is considered that it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to form the friction resistance between the wire and the sealing plug ... to permit a movement of the wire relative to the sealing plug when the wire is caused to move."

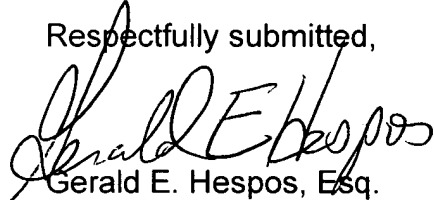
Counsel and the applicant certainly agree with the Examiner's conclusion that the Makita et al. "reference does not discuss" any aspect of a frictional resistance that permits movement of the wire relative to the sealing plug without permitting movement of the sealing plug relative to the housing. Counsel and the applicant simply have no idea how the examiner could jump from that logical statement to the conclusion that the absence of any mention of the claimed invention in the Makita et al. reference would make the claimed invention obvious. In this regard, there must be something in the reference that would lead the skilled artisan from the reference to the claimed invention. By the Examiner's admission, there is no such teaching or motivation in the Makita et al. reference. To the contrary, the Makita et al. reference would appear to provide more frictional resistance between the wire and the sealing plug than between the sealing plug and the housing. Specifically, the Examiner will note that the projections on the outer surface of the sealing plug of Makita et al. are radially much longer than the projections on the inner surface of the Makita et al. sealing plug. The radially larger projections are more flexible and provide less surface contact area than radially smaller projections. Thus, the Makita et al. reference would appear to be the exact opposite of the embodiment of the invention depicted in FIG. 5. It is believed that the greater flexibility and the smaller surface contact area of the radially outwardly extending projections 34 of Makita et al. would provide lower frictional resistance than the shorter inner projections of Makita et al. As a result, it is submitted that there is absolutely nothing in the Makita et al. reference nor in any of the other known prior art that would render the claimed invention obvious.

The applicant is pleased to note that the Examiner considers claims 6 and 7 to be directed to patentable subject matter. The Examiner has indicated that these claims would be allowed if rewritten or amended into independent form.

As noted above, claims 6 and 7 have been amended into independent form. As a result, claims 6 and 7 are believed to be in condition for allowance.

In view of the preceding amendments and remarks, it is submitted that all of the claims remaining in the application are directed to patentable subject matter, and allowance is solicited. The Examiner is urged to contact applicant's attorney at the number below to expedite the prosecution of this application.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gerald E. Hespos". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Gerald" and last name "Hespos" clearly distinguishable.

Gerald E. Hespos, Esq.

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